

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method of delivering links for subsequent display by an
2 application program running on a user's computer, each link being associated with
3 a location of information on a computer or a computer network, the method
4 comprising:
 - 5 assembling a plurality of links for transfer to an application-specific
6 location;
 - 7 storing the plurality of links in the application-specific location to
8 automatically integrate the plurality of links into at least one menu of the application
9 program.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the application program is a
2 browser.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein the menu is accessed using a
2 toolbar.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the toolbar is a browser toolbar.
- 1 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the toolbar is an operating system
2 toolbar.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assembling the plurality
2 of links comprises:
 - 3 determining a profile of the user based on previously collected user
4 information.
- 1 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising assembling the plurality
2 of links based on the profile.
- 1 8. The method of claim 6 wherein determining a profile comprises
2 determining the profile based on information stored on the user's computer.

1 9. The method of claim 6 wherein determining a profile comprises
2 determining a profile based on cookies stored on the user's computer.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assembling a plurality
2 of links comprises retrieving links from at least one link server accessible via a
3 computer network.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assembling a plurality
2 of links comprises assembling at least one picture or graphic associated with at least
3 one link.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing comprises
2 appending the plurality of links to an existing file on the user's computer.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing comprises:
2 storing a directory structure on the user's computer, the directory
3 structure including at least one directory and a plurality of files with each file
4 corresponding to one of the plurality of links.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein all of the links are related to a
2 single domain.

1 15. The method of claim 1 further comprising recording billing
2 information related to storing the plurality of links on the user's computer.

1 16. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing is performed
2 during an installation procedure of a requested application program.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of assembling is
2 performed during an installation procedure of a requested application program.

1 18. A method for delivering links associated with locations of
2 information on a computer network from a server on the computer network to a
3 browser running on a user's computer system, the method comprising:

4 receiving a request from the browser to transfer information from the
5 server for display by the browser;

6 transferring a plurality of links from the server to a browser-specific
7 location on the user's computer system to integrate the plurality of links into at least
8 one menu or toolbar of the browser.

1 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising storing accounting
2 information on the server related to number and type of links transferred to the user's
3 computer system.

1 20. The method of claim 19 further comprising transferring the
2 accounting information to a second server on the computer network.

1 21. The method of claim 18 wherein the user's computer system
2 comprises a local area network.

1 22. The method of claim 21 further comprising:
2 prompting a user to indicate which links or type of links are desired;
3 and
4 generating a list of links based on the indicated links or type of links
5 prior to transferring the links to the user's computer system.

1 23. The method of claim 18 further comprising requesting permission
2 from the user's computer system and performing the step of transferring only if
3 permission is granted.

1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein requesting permission comprises
2 prompting a user for permission to transfer the plurality of links.

1 25. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of transferring is
2 performed without informing the user.

1 26. The method of claim 18 further comprising dynamically
2 constructing a list of links after receiving the request from the browser.

1 27. The method of claim 26 wherein the step of dynamically
2 constructing a list of links comprises dynamically constructing a list of links based
3 on a user profile.

1 28. The method of claim 26 wherein the step of dynamically
2 constructing a list of links comprises obtaining links from another server on the
3 computer network.

1 29. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
2 accessing a list of links previously stored on the user's computer
3 system; and
4 modifying the list prior to transferring the links to the user's computer
5 system.

1 30. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of transferring
2 comprises transferring the plurality of links to a single file on the user's computer
3 system.

1 31. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of transferring
2 comprises transferring each link to a separate file on the user's computer system.

1 32. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of transferring
2 comprises transferring at least one directory with a plurality of files, each file
3 corresponding to one of the plurality of links.

1 33. A method for providing links to a browser program running on
2 a computer connected to a network, the method comprising:
3 receiving a request from the browser program to transfer a file
4 representing a home page for display in the browser program;
5 determining a storage location on the computer for links used by the
6 browser program;
7 requesting permission to modify links used by the browser program;
8 generating a list of links to be transferred to the computer; and
9 transferring the list of links to the storage location on the computer for
10 subsequent use by the browser in retrieving information from the network.

1 34. The method of claim 33 wherein the step of generating a list of
2 links is performed prior to the step of receiving a request from the browser to
3 establish a plurality of predetermined lists of links for subsequent transfers.

1 35. The method of claim 33 wherein the step of generating a list of
2 links comprises obtaining links from a link server connected to the network.

1 36. The method of claim 33 wherein the step of generating a list of
2 links comprises creating a hierarchical list having links grouped by subject
3 categories.

1 37. The method of claim 36 wherein the step of transferring the list
2 of links comprises transferring the hierarchical list to a single file on the computer.

1 38. The method of claim 36 wherein the hierarchical list comprises
2 a directory structure having link files within at least one directory and wherein
3 transferring the list of links comprises transferring the directory structure to the
4 storage location on the computer for subsequent use by the browser in retrieving
5 information from the network.

1 39. The method of claim 33 further comprising forwarding billing
2 information associated with the list of links transferred to the computer to a server
3 on the network.

1 40. A computer readable storage medium having stored data
2 representing instructions executable by a computer to deliver links for subsequent
3 display by an application program running on a user's computer, the computer
4 readable storage medium comprising:
5 instructions for assembling a plurality of links for transfer to the user's
6 computer; and

7 instructions for storing the plurality of links in a location specific to
8 the application program to automatically integrate the plurality of links into at least
9 one menu of the application program.

1 41. A computer readable storage medium having stored data
2 representing instructions executable by a computer to provide links to a browser
3 program running on a second computer connected to a network, the computer
4 readable storage medium comprising:

5 instructions for receiving a request from the browser program to
6 transfer a file representing a home page for display in the browser program;

7 instructions for determining a storage location on the computer for
8 links used by the browser program;

9 instructions for requesting permission to modify links used by the
10 browser program;

11 instructions for generating a list of links to be transferred to the
12 computer; and

13 instructions for transferring the list of links to the storage location on
14 the computer for subsequent use by the browser in retrieving information from the
15 network.

1 42. A system for providing links to an application program running
2 on a computer connected to a network, the system comprising:

3 a file server connected to the network for receiving requests from the
4 application program to transfer files to be displayed by the application program, the
5 file server identifying the application program and determining a storage location for
6 links used by the application program;

7 a link server in communication with the file server over the network,
8 the link server generating at least one list of links and periodically transferring the
9 at least one list to the file server;

10 wherein the file server transfers the at least one list of links received
11 from the link server to the storage location for links used by the application program
12 for subsequent use in retrieving information from the network.

1 43. The system of claim 42 further comprising:

2 an accounting server in communication with the file server, the
3 accounting server collecting information relative to numbers and types of links
4 transferred from the file server to the computer or from the link server to the file
5 server.

1 44. A method for providing links to an application program running
2 on a user's computer connected to a computer network, the method comprising:
3 receiving a request from the application program to transfer a file
4 representing a home page for display in the application program;
5 transferring instructions to the user's computer for subsequent use in
6 delivering links to the user's computer, the instructions selected based at least in part
7 on the application program;
8 determining a storage location on the user's computer for links based
9 at least in part on the application program;
10 generating a list of links to be transferred to the user's computer;
11 transferring the list of links to the storage location on the user's
12 computer for subsequent use by the application program in retrieving information
13 from the network; and
14 storing accounting information associated with type and number of
15 links transferred to the user's computer.

1 45. A method for delivering links from a web server to a browser
2 running on a user's computer system, the method comprising:
3 receiving a request from the browser to transfer a file representing a
4 page for display in the browser;
5 automatically transferring a plurality of objects contained within the
6 page to the browser in response to the request, wherein at least one object includes
7 instructions for transferring a hierarchical directory structure of files and directories
8 to the user's computer system;
9 generating a list of links to be transferred to the user's computer
10 system by assembling a plurality of links into a hierarchical directory structure of
11 files and directories wherein each file corresponds to a single link;
12 transferring the hierarchical directory structure of files and directories
13 to the user's computer system;
14 storing the hierarchical directory structure of files and directories in
15 a browser-specific location using the previously transferred instructions contained
16 within the object such that the hierarchical directory structure integrates the plurality
17 of links into at least the browser.

1 46. The method of claim 45 further comprising:
2 prompting the user to enter at least one name corresponding to at least
3 one directory of the hierarchical directory structure.

1 47. The method of claim 45 further comprising:
2 recording accounting information relative to number and type of links
3 transferred and stored on the user's computer system; and
4 transferring the accounting information to an accounting server.

1 48. The method of claim 45 further comprising:
2 prompting the user to determine a location for storage of the
3 hierarchical directory structure within a directory located in the browser-specific
4 location of the user's computer system.